

DCI
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We have offered to have this interview because all of us, all of the American Intelligence Community, are gravely concerned about damage being done to our intelligence capabilities by unauthorized disclosures of sensitive information. We have already lost capabilities critical to protecting innocent civilians, personnel and embassies and other installations overseas from terrorist attacks. We can tell you that there are many, many of us in the Intelligence Community who fear that if we do not establish greater discipline over the flow of sensitive information to the whole world we will no longer have an adequate intelligence agency. That's what we are to talk about.

Over recent years we have spent billions of dollars and trained thousands of splendid people to restore the finest intelligence service in the world. Yet every method we have of acquiring intelligence -- our agents, our relationships with other intelligence services, our photographic, electronic, and communications tracking capabilities -- has been damaged as disclosures of sensitive information enables our adversaries to defeat our growing capabilities.

Stories in both the print and electronic media have shown, sometimes in great detail, how to counter capabilities in which we have invested billions of dollars and many years of creative talent and effort. This, time and time again, has enabled those hostile to us to abort huge investments, to conceal and otherwise deny us information critical to our defense, and to deprive us of the ability to protect our citizens from terrorist attack. Leakers are costing the taxpayers millions and even billions of dollars -- and, more important, putting Americans abroad as well as our country itself at risk.

Certainly our nation cannot permit this to continue to occur. To do so would be to undercut our national security, personal safety and hopes for arms control and our efforts to establish and maintain peace in the world.

What we hope to get out of this interview is not headlines or an exciting story but a sober analysis of what is at stake in this issue and how it can be addressed without infringing on the essential role of the media in providing the public the information it needs for the self government of our nation. We would first like to establish that we yield to no one in our admiration for the diligence and ingenuity of the working press in gathering and publishing news. We applaud its exposure of waste, inefficiency, corruption and other misconduct. We hope to reduce the level of intensity of the charges by providing every assurance that we are not out to undercut the First Amendment or muzzle the press.

What we are talking about here is not malfeasance, wrong doing, waste, fraud, abuse or mismanagement. We are talking about unique fragile sources of information that enable the United States to protect itself in a very unfriendly world. There have been no allegations that these collection activities have been mismanaged or that any wrong doing has been involved. The only reason that they are being revealed in the press is because they are sensational. As a nation we are paying a heavy price for such sensationalism.

We believe a great many journalists and others in the media recognize that the nation has a problem which must be dealt with responsibly. It is essential to differentiate between the very serious damage done to the nation's security through the publication of leaked sensitive intelligence and the need for the American public to possess as much information as

possible to make informed judgments about the conduct of the government's business.

The publisher of The Washington Post recently cited an example of the kind of damage which we have sustained, telling how a television network and a columnist had obtained information that we were reading the messages of people arranging the bombing of the U.S. Embassy in Beirut. Shortly after this public disclosure, that traffic stopped. This undermined our efforts to capture the terrorist leaders and eliminated a source of information about future attacks. This has happened too often since then. It has cut off overnight our access to Libyan terrorist planning to attack U.S. citizens and facilities.

The Publisher of The Washington Post stated correctly the responsibility of the media in such matters in her recent talk. She called for "...full cooperation wherever possible between the media and the authorities. When the media obtains especially sensitive information, we are willing to tell the authorities what we have learned and what we plan to report. And while reserving the right to make the final decision ourselves, we are anxious to listen to arguments about why information should not be aired. (The media) want to do nothing that would endanger human life or national security. We are willing to cooperate with the authorities in withholding information that could have those consequences."

We have been gratified by the readiness of many reporters and editors to carefully consider sometimes withholding publication of information which could jeopardize national interests or to treat or present a story in a manner which meets the public need, yet minimizes potential damage to

intelligence sources. The trick is to recognize the potential for damage to consult on how it might be minimized. We are always ready and available on short notice to help on that and we are prepared to intensify this kind of cooperation.

We recognize that the first line of defense and the most effective way of preventing these types of leaks is to increase discipline within the government itself. The inability to control sensitive information is destructive of the morale of people who do keep secrets, as well as damaging to our security. During the last several years, the President has emphasized the special obligation federal workers have to protect the classified information with which they are entrusted. We have increased and must intensify our efforts to uncover those who violate this trust. We are studying procedures and possibly new laws needed to deal with federal employees who decide on their own to disclose classified information.

We ask that the press work with the American Intelligence Community and the other national security organizations in protecting this nation's legitimate secrets. Some organizations and individual journalists already do. We strongly encourage the other members of the press to do so too.

There can be freedom of the press and a sensitivity by the press to the need to protect military, diplomatic and intelligence activities that defend this nation. The nation can have both freedom and security, but without security it will have no freedom.

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Concern in public opinion, in the American Intelligence Community and in the media about the danger which unauthorized disclosures of classified information to our national security and to the safety of our citizens is deeper and more widespread than some journalists would have us believe. There is no desire to attack the nation's free and vigorous press. Rather there is great respect for the media, the people who work in it and for their watchdog functions in our society.

We have all seen in recent weeks that our ability to protect life and limb against terrorism are being gravely weakened by leaks and publication of sensitive information.

Over recent years we have spent billions of dollars and trained thousands of splendid people to restore the finest intelligence service in the world. Yet every method we have of acquiring intelligence -our agents, our relationships with other intelligence services, our photographic, electronic, and communications tracking capabilities -- has been damaged as disclosures of sensitive information enables our adversaries to defeat our growing capabilities. Certainly our nation cannot permit this to occur continue. This is a challenge all of us must deal with together. An agenda for this would have these components:

1. Establish greater discipline in the handling and protection of sensitive information within the government.
2. Improve cooperation between the media and the government in avoiding damage from disclosure of classified information.

3. Deter the unauthorized disclosure of classified information by establishing and enforcing appropriate penalties.

I hasten to add, however, that the most effective way of curtailing these damages is to increase discipline within the government. The inability to control sensitive information is destructive of the morale of people who do keep secrets, as well as damaging to our security. During the last several years, the President has emphasized the special obligation federal workers have to protect the classified information with which they are entrusted. We have increased our efforts to uncover those who violate this trust.

Fortunately, a great many journalists and others in the media recognize that the nation has a problem which must be dealt with responsibly. It is essential to differentiate between the very serious damage done to the nation's security through the publication of leaked sensitive intelligence and the need for the American public to possess as much information as possible to make informed judgments about the conduct of the government's business.

In the face of the new dangerous threats that we face from international terrorism, now is the time to mutually address those responsibilities together in a serious and measured way.

Mrs. Graham stated correctly the responsibility of the media in such matters in her recent talk. She called for ". . . full cooperation wherever possible between the media and the authorities. When the media obtains especially sensitive information, we are willing to tell the authorities what we have learned and what we plan to report. And while

reserving the right to make the final decision ourselves, we are anxious to listen to arguments about why information should not be aired. [The media] want to do nothing that would endanger human life or national security. We are willing to cooperate with the authorities in withholding information that could have those consequences."

We have been gratified by the readiness of many reporters and editors to carefully consider sometimes withholding publication of information which could jeopardize national interests or to treat or present a story in a manner which meets the public need, yet minimizes potential damage and to consult on how it might be minimized. We are always ready and available on short notice to help on that.

Congress, shortly after it established the National Security Agency to gather signals intelligence, in 1950 enacted a law which prohibits the publication of information about communications intelligence. There has been widespread violation of that law over recent weeks and months. Much damage has been done. Kay Graham, the publisher of The Washington Post, in a recent very thoughtful and constructive speech cited the kind of damage which we have sustained. She told how a television network and a columnist had obtained information that we were reading the messages of people arranging the bombing of the U.S. Embassy in Beirut. Shortly after this public disclosure, that traffic stopped. This undermined our efforts to capture the terrorist leaders and eliminated a source of information about future attacks.

There is a responsibility, before rushing into print or onto the air waves, to weigh and consider the danger to life and limb of our citizens

and others and to the international relationships and the reputation for reliability of our nation.

The temptation to go beyond the facts and piece together and stretch fragments of information in order to make a publishable story and sometimes in order to sensationalize is a dangerous thing. It can and has cost lives. It can wrongly impair reputations and disrupt relationships critical to our national interest. Let me illustrate with a true story. During 1985, a well-known reporter called the information officer at the Central Intelligence Agency and told him he had a story that we had helped the security service of a friendly nation stage a car bombing of the headquarters of a terrorist organization which had resulted in death or injury to a large number of residents and passers-by in the neighborhood. Our officer told the reporter that his information was incorrect and that the CIA had no knowledge of and no involvement, direct or indirect, in the attack. He was also told that if he charged U.S. involvement, he might wind up with blood on his hands. The story was run in his newspaper. It got around the world and created a false impression of U.S. involvement in the bombing.

The House Select Committee on Intelligence investigated the matter and concluded that "no complicity of direct or indirect involvement can be established with respect to the March 8 bombing in Beirut." But this came too late! A month after the misleading story was published to the world, terrorists hijacked a TWA plane and its 153 passengers and took them to Beirut. When the hijackers shot and killed an American serviceman, they claimed it to be in retaliation for the bombing in Beirut in which the reporter had involved the CIA after the CIA's

spokesman had denied to him any involvement, direct or indirect, in the bombing.

In putting this story together, the reporters had talks with officials in the Executive Branch and Members and staffers of the Congress about collateral matters including our long-term practice of providing training and technical assistance to the security services of other countries in order to improve our capabilities and cooperation on counterintelligence and counterterrorism.

In recent months, we have seen media stories deprive us of knowledge about the planned attacks of terrorists on our citizens and our installations around the world. We have lost access to information that enabled us to follow and abort attacks that terrorists planned and apprehend and retaliate against terrorists.

During World War II, allied ability to read German and Japanese communications shortened the war and saved an incalculable number of lives. A single media story could have taken that advantage away from us overnight.

In 1950, Congress recognized this by enacting restrictions against publishing information about communications intelligence. The House Judiciary Committee carefully limited the application of this prohibition to information about communications intelligence which it termed: "a small degree of classified matter, a category which is both vital and vulnerable to almost a unique degree."

The growing will and ability of our friends and allies to counter terrorism and our own ability to protect our citizens depends very heavily on this particular intelligence capability. It would be very difficult

indeed to justify failure to use a law enacted by the Congress for that specific purpose to deter further damage to a capability so critical at this point in history.

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Our national security and our ability to protect life and limb against terrorism are being gravely weakened by leaks and publication of sensitive information. Over recent years we have spent billions of dollars and trained thousands of splendid people to restore the finest intelligence service in the world. Yet every method we have of acquiring intelligence -- our agents, our relationships with other intelligence services, our photographic, electronic, and communications tracking capabilities -- has been damaged as disclosures of sensitive information enables our adversaries to defeat our growing capabilities. Certainly we cannot permit this to occur unchecked.

Yet we hear much interpretation of the Intelligence Community's concern for the preservation of U.S. intelligence as an attack on the nation's free and vigorous press. That's not true. We have great respect for the media, the people who work in it and for their watchdog functions in our society. We hear others blithely insist that only information provided by this country's traitors to the nation's adversaries is harmful, while the sensitive U.S. national security information the KGB and its cohorts read in the U.S. press is considered to be not damaging.

Harry Truman dealt with this when he said in a 1951 press conference: "Whether it be treason or not, it does the U.S. just as much harm for those military (and national intelligence) secrets to be made known to potential enemies through open publication as it does for military (and national intelligence) secrets to be given to an enemy through the clandestine operation of spies."

Fortunately, a great many journalists and others in the media recognize that the nation has a problem which must be dealt with

responsibly. It is essential to differentiate between the very serious damage done to the nation's security through the publication of leaked sensitive intelligence and the need for the American public to possess as much information as possible to make informed judgments about the conduct of the government's business.

There can be no doubt about the need to protect intelligence capabilities. Congress has mandated the Director of Central Intelligence to do that. In recent months, we have seen media stories deprive us of knowledge about the planned attacks of terrorists on our citizens and our installations around the world. We have lost access to information that enabled us to follow and abort attacks that terrorists planned and apprehend and retaliate against terrorists.

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Communications intelligence is only part of the problem which faces us. Publication of other classified information can also jeopardize lives and impair our security and foreign relationships. While it is obviously desirable for the press to seek out, publish and criticize malfeasance or nonfeasance on the part of individuals or government entities, it is injurious to the nation's interest for the press to attempt deliberately to ferret out and expose the sources and methods used in intelligence collection. It is equally damaging to publish such information provided by leakers without attempting to determine the degree of damage that will result from such exposure.

Many of the press put the blame for the hemorrhage of secrets on the leakers, but the press itself caters to such leakers, encourages their purposes and then absolves itself from the damage that results to the nation's security from its actions. In short, the press often carelessly tosses about the verbal hand grenades that a leaker hands it. When they explode, killing people and inflicting great damage, the press shrugs and says in effect, well, it's a free country. It seems to those of us in the U.S. national security agencies who are endeavoring to protect this nation's security and thereby its freedoms, including the very freedom the press enjoys, that the press cannot have it both ways. The press is outraged when hostile spies are uncovered in the U.S., but happily conveys equally harmful information to our adversaries by printing very damaging leaks. Why aren't the leakers who have betrayed our government's trust condemned

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by the press at least to the same extent that it chastizes those who spend
thousands of dollars for costly aircraft toilet seats? It seems to us
there is a good deal of media hypocrisy in all this.

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and the other national security organizations in protecting this nation's
legitimate secrets. Some organizations and individual journalists already
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